

NEWS ARTICLE: 6.27.03

I AM AN AMERICAN

As we celebrate the birthday of our wonderful country, I would like to share a favorite poem of mine that I often use in patriotic speeches I am asked to give. I have never known who the author was, but I am always moved by his/her words that more eloquently than I, proclaim why I am an American.

I Am An American

I Am An American. Listen to my words. Listen well for my country is a strong country and my message is a strong message.

I Am An American and I speak for freedom and the dignity of the individual.

I Am An American and my ancestors have given their blood for freedom.

On the green at Lexington and on the snow at Valley Forge.

On the walls of Ft. Sumter and in the fields at Gettysburg.

On the waters of the Marue and in the shadows of the Argonne.

On the beachheads of Salerno and Normandy and on the sands of O-Kinawa.

On the cold bleak hills called Pork Chop and Old Baldy and on Heartbreak Ridge.

A million and more of my countrymen have given their lives for freedom.

I Am An American and my Country is their eternal monument.

I Am An American and my ancestors have bequeathed to me

The laughter of a small boy as he watches a circus clown's antics,

The sweet delicious coldness of the first bite of Peppermint ice cream on the 4th of July.

The little tenseness of the baseball crowd as the umpire calls Batter Up!

The high school band's rendition of the Stars and Stripes Forever in the

Memorial Day Parade

The clear, sharp ring of a school bell on a crisp Fall morning.

These and many other things they have fought for and left for me.

I Am An American and the fruits of my thought and labor are mine to enjoy.

I Am An American and my land is a land of many realms and mansions.

It is the land of Ohio corn, potatoes and pastures.

The realm of thousands of acres of golden wheat stretching across the flat miles of Kansas.

The land of precision assembly lines in Detroit.

The realm of milling cattle in the stockyards of Chicago.

The land of glowing skylines of Birmingham and Pittsburgh, San Francisco and New York.

And my churches and homes are the Mansions of Heaven.

I Am An American and in my churches and homes everyone worships God in his own way.

The Jewish boy saying, Hear O Israel, the Lord is One.

The Catholic girl praying Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.

The Protestant boy singing A Mighty Fortress is Our God.

Each choosing, believing and praying - all joining in the Universal prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven with the voice in the soul of every human being that cries out to be free.

I Am An American and I believe America has answered that voice.

I Am An American and I believe my country offers Freedom and Opportunity such as no land before Her has ever done!

Freedom to Work as Mechanic, Farmer, Merchant or Truck Driver.

Freedom to Think as Chemist, Lawyer, Doctor or Priest.

Freedom to Love as Child, Parent, Husband or Wife.

Freedom to

SPEAK to

PRAY to

READ to

ARGUE to

PRAISE to

CRITICIZE

Freedom to EAT to SLEEP to WORK to PLAY without FEAR. Freedom to live over 200 million different lives!

I Am An American and my heritage is of the Land and of the Spirit of the Heart and of the Soul

Show me a country greater than my country

A people happier than my people.

I Am An American and I speak for Freedom and the Dignity of the Individual.

Have a wonderful 4th of July!

By Senator Bev Hammerstrom
17th District